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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Fifty-second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 47th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 17 April 1996, at 6 p.m.

Chairman:	Mr. VERGNE SABOIA	(Brazil)
later:	Mr. VASSYLENKO (Vice-Chairman)	(Ukraine)

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The meeting was called to order at 6.05 p.m.

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES, INCLUDING:

(a) QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CYPRUS (item 10) (continued)

(E/CN.4/1996/3, 4 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2, 6, 7 9, 12, 16 and Add.1, 54-57, 59-65, 66 and Corr.1 and 2, 67 and Add.1, 68, 69, 107, 111, 114, 115, 119, 121-131, 133, 135, 139, 145, 146, 149, 150 and 154; E/CN.4/1996/NGO/9, 10, 12, 16-18, 21, 29, 30, 36, 44, 52, 54, 57, 58, 62, 67-69, 80 and 87; A/50/471, 567-569, 663, 734, 767 and 894-S/1996/203)

1. Mr. V.K. GUPTA (Indian Council of Education), noting that Governments often used force and violated human rights to quell protests against injustices, said that national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) played a most important role in protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms by taking up the cause of the oppressed. Their effectiveness would be further strengthened if they took concerted action to focus on specific areas of human rights abuse and became a vector for human rights education.

2. Respect for human rights could be ensured through the adoption of a dual approach, namely, by defending the rights of innocent civilians and punishing perpetrators of abuse.

3. Mr. Vassylenko (Ukraine), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

4. Mr. SRIVASTAVA (International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies) said the absence of a democratic culture in Pakistan was indicative of the terror and oppression that prevailed in that country, which had no place in the community of nations that upheld democratic norms and human rights. A legacy of oppression had been handed down to its present leaders who continued to condemn minorities, women and Muslim sects. For the people of occupied Kashmir, moreover, the prospect of sending representatives to the national assembly remained a distant dream, and they had no forum in which to voice their opinions.

5. It was time that the international community should urge the Government of Pakistan to take a closer look at the functioning of its democratic structure. There was no doubt that human rights were being violated within the country, and the policies of the Government, by encouraging terrorism, also jeopardized the rights of people beyond its borders. The international community should take urgent action to curb the spread of Pakistan's State-sponsored terrorism.

6. Mr. RIZOPOULOS (International Federation for the Protection of the Rights of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic and Other Minorities) said over the previous 11 years thousands of Kurdish villages in Turkey had been forcibly evacuated or destroyed and countless civilians, including intellectuals, had been killed in the course of military interventions. The Government of Turkey's response to those acts had been silence.

7. Greek Cypriots were also suffering at the hands of the Turkish military and 1,619 of them had disappeared since the Turkish occupation of a portion of Cyprus 22 years earlier. The international community should not accept the official explanation of the fate of those persons offered by the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community but insist on specific answers and bring those responsible to account.

8. Moreover, the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/1996/54) revealed that Greek Cypriots and Maronites enclaved in the Karpasia area were separated from their families, deprived of education and the right to practice their religion, and had been murdered, beaten and raped. Equally tragic was the situation in Famagusta-Amochostos, which had been colonized by Turkish settlers. He therefore urged the Commission to call for the implementation of Security Council resolution 550/1984.

9. Referring to the serious human rights situation in Albania, he quoted a United States State Department report describing the extent of executive and parliamentary pressure exerted on the judiciary and noted that, in preparation for elections in June 1996, the Albanian Government had passed a law ensuring its control over the electoral process. Moreover, laws had been enacted restricting the right of Albania's ethnic Greek minority to practice their religion and their access to education. Discrimination against that minority extended to employment in the civil service, even in areas where the population was predominantly Greek.

10. He requested the Commission to impress upon the Albanian Government the need to comply with the obligation it had assumed under international agreements to guarantee the rights of all Albanians, including minorities.

11. Mr. MEGHLAOUI (Algeria) reviewed the steps taken by his Government in the areas of politics, economics and security to ensure a future marked by peace, progress, freedom and democracy.

12. Two years earlier, the President of the Republic had been installed by the National Consultative Council to guide Algeria during a transitional period, and in October 1994, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the beginning of the war of national liberation, he had announced the holding of pluralist presidential elections, the first in Algeria's history as an independent State. The international community had greeted the announcement of the elections, held on 16 November 1995 in the presence of international observers, with considerable scepticism, but an impressive voter turnout and the openness and fairness of the proceedings had been commended by the team of observers and international media.

13. On 6 April 1996, the President had embarked on an exchange of views with national figures, leaders of the political parties and national organizations as an expression of the will to promote national dialogue and as the best way of completing the establishment of democratic national institutions.

14. In line with the progress made on the political front, economic reforms had also begun to yield positive results, gradually pulling Algeria out of its recession. Among other encouraging signs, macroeconomic and financial

equilibrium had been achieved, leading to a 4.5 per cent GDP growth rate in 1995, and it was expected that inflation would decline to the world average by 1998.

15. His Government was determined to use all the legal means at its disposal to fight terrorism, and although a few scattered attacks still took place, the security situation was constantly improving and the curfew was no longer in force. Under the law on clemency, over 1,000 persons had surrendered and returned to their families to lead normal lives.

16. Algeria had always considered that terrorism was a global phenomenon that called for a global response, and his Government was therefore encouraged by the growing international awareness of the issues involved. However, many countries continued to adopt a dogmatic position on the question of terrorism and refused to condemn groups which engaged in reprehensible acts. His Government was astonished to note the way terrorists frequently earned more understanding from certain quarters than did the States which sought to protect individuals and property from criminal acts. If the Commission was not careful, terrorist factions would use that body as a part of their overall strategy.

17. Algeria reaffirmed its determination to continue, in spite of difficulties, to do its utmost to fulfil its obligations under the agreements and conventions to which it was a party, the latest one it had ratified being the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. More than ever before, Algeria was ready to play an active part in the collective task of promoting human rights and would ensure the protection of individual and collective fundamental freedoms.

18. Mr. KONISHI (Japan) said that since human rights were of concern to the entire international community, the Commission's discussions on the situation in specific countries did not constitute interference in their internal affairs.

19. According to the report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan (E/CN.4/1996/64), the human rights situation in that country was dismal due to ongoing conflicts. His Government therefore strongly supported the efforts of the United Nations special mission to achieve a comprehensive solution to the crisis there.

20. Referring to Colombia, he said that his own Government appreciated the efforts made by the Government of that country to effect change, but hoped it would do even more.

21. Japan welcomed the Cuban Government's decision to allow representatives of four international human rights organizations to visit Cuba, as well as the decision earlier that year to release some political prisoners. It was concerned, however, that the members of Concilio Cubano, representing dissidents and human rights organizations, had been harassed and arrested, and his Government called on the Government of Cuba to allow the Special Rapporteur to visit the country in order to carry out his mandate in full.

22. He also noted that the United Nations had a significant role to play in resolving the question of Cyprus and hoped that negotiations between the parties would be resumed under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

23. He welcomed the invitation extended by the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Special Representative and other Special Rapporteurs on the right to freedom of expression and religious intolerance, and trusted that its Government would continue its cooperation with the international community and the Commission.

24. There had been no meaningful improvement in the plight of Kurds and Shiites in the north and south of Iraq. His Government therefore urged Iraq to implement Security Council resolutions 686 (1991) and 688 (1991) in full and cooperate with the Special Rapporteur.

25. While there had been a number of positive developments in Myanmar during the previous year, its Government should make even greater efforts to bring about national reconciliation, democracy, and respect for human rights. The international community, moreover, should encourage Myanmar to participate more actively in international relations rather than isolate it even further. His own Government would continue its dialogue with Myanmar, which should cooperate fully with international bodies and respond positively to the Special Rapporteur's recommendations.

26. Japan similarly called on the Government of Nigeria to ensure the observance of human rights and take further measures for the early restoration of democracy.

27. In condemning the violation of human rights in Rwanda, he expressed the hope for early national reconciliation and democracy and considered it was crucial that the international community should support the efforts of the Government of Rwanda in that respect.

28. His Government was gravely concerned by reports of indiscriminate and deliberate aerial bombardment of civilian targets in southern Sudan and called upon the Government of Sudan to cease such action immediately and cooperate with the Special Rapporteur.

29. It was most regrettable that, according to various reports, arbitrary arrests and detention continued to be widely practised in Zaire.

30. His Government was pleased to note the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission in East Timor and the visit of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to that country. The series of meetings between the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal, under the good offices of the Secretary-General, had established an atmosphere conducive to constructive negotiations. Japan hoped the Indonesian Government would continue to cooperate with the international community and the Commission on Human Rights.

31. Lastly, he welcomed the Dayton Agreements and United States initiatives on the former Yugoslavia that had achieved an understanding among the parties concerned. The situation in Kosovo, as reported by the Special Rapporteur, was alarming and he urged all parties to seek a peaceful solution to their

problems and restore respect for human rights. Full cooperation with the Special Rapporteur, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe was vital. Japan had recently made a contribution of US$ 600,000 to the human rights field operation in the former Yugoslavia, in response to an appeal by the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

32. Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt), speaking on behalf of Arab Ambassadors, said Lebanon had been the target of barbaric Israeli aggression and massive aerial and naval bombardments which had caused extensive loss of life. The blockade of Lebanese ports prevented the delivery of supplies, vital installations had been damaged, and over half a million persons had been displaced.

33. Such attacks compromised the peace process in the Middle East, and he urged the Commission to issue a declaration condemning the violation not only of human rights but also the Geneva Conventions and principles of international law taking place in that region. The international community must act swiftly to end the aggression, supply humanitarian aid to the refugees and demand the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

34. Speaking as the representative of Egypt, he said that Israeli aggression against Lebanon over the previous five days violated the Geneva Conventions and all human rights standards. Any further aggression could compromise the entire Middle East peace process, which Egypt wished to see completed. Israel must cease its aggression against civilians, compensate them, and implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) by withdrawing completely from Lebanese territory.

35. Egypt looked forward to the implementation of the civilian component of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Guarantees of lasting peace in Bosnia required effective international institutions to pave the way for free elections. Refugees and displaced persons must be allowed to return to their homes and recover their possessions, and human rights and fundamental freedoms must be restored to the entire population. All countries must cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Lastly, Egypt was seriously concerned about the tragedy unfolding in Chechnya. It welcomed the latest initiative by President Yeltsin, and called for an early start to negotiations between the warring parties.

36. Mr. EAFEARE (Observer for Papua New Guinea) said that the report of the Special Rapporteur on his mission to the Papua New Guinea island of Bougainville (E/CN.4/1996/4/Add.2) encapsulated the progress made by the Papua New Guinea authorities in the various peace initiatives and the role of the Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG) in that process. The report could, however, have discussed more fully the failure of various factions of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) to follow up the peace initiatives. BRA had broken down into a number of semi-autonomous criminal units, many of whom had failed to uphold the undertakings given by Mr. Sam Kauona on BRA's behalf at the September 1995 meeting in Cairns, Australia.

37. The report also placed insufficient emphasis on the funds established by the Government to implement the peace agreements, which amounted to some US$ 171 million, and failed to mention its decision to establish a National Commission on Human Rights. Fuller coverage might also have been given to the process of setting up the BTG. Two positions allocated to BRA leaders had yet to be filled, since the hard line BRA elements lacked leaders capable of negotiating a peace settlement on their behalf. Nor was the question of an amnesty a new issue, having been on the Government's agenda since 1988.

38. Mr. AHDEROM (Baha'i International Community) said that over the past 17 years the Commission had been presented with irrefutable evidence of violations of the rights of Baha'is in the Islamic Republic of Iran. There was a systematic plan to destroy the Baha'i religious community within and outside that country, and proof that the plan was orchestrated by the Iranian regime had been provided in 1993 by the Special Representative, Mr. Reynaldo Galindo Pohl. Baha'is were called upon publicly to renounce their religious convictions and, in a new development, had recently been charged with apostasy, an offence that carried the death penalty. That charge was of course based not on sanctionable behaviour but on religious belief. Yet the Iranian Government had consistently denied that the persecution of Baha'is was religiously motivated, instead denouncing them as agents of foreign Powers and members of subversive political organizations. The Commission must call for the implementation of all the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance in his report (E/CN.4/1996/95/Add.2) on his visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran. It should also once again adopt a resolution expressing concern for the plight of the Baha'is and should keep the situation under review.

39. Mr. WIN (International Peace Bureau) said that since the 1990 elections in Myanmar, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) had consistently refused to convene the elected National Assembly (Pyithu Hluttaw) and had instead set up a National Convention to draft a new constitution. Only 2.88 per cent of the delegates to the Convention were elected representatives of the people, delegates were not consulted regarding its objectives and working procedures, its documentation was censored, and any provisions drafted had to recognize "the leading role of the military in the future political life of Myanmar". SLORC was using the Convention as a means of stalling the democratic process.

40. The United Nations had consistently recognized that it was those elected in 1990 who should form the Government; yet it had been reluctant to condemn the National Convention out of hand, instead hoping that that process, albeit illegal and undemocratic, might somehow lead to a workable compromise between the military and civilian leaders. Following the recent decision by the National League for Democracy party - which had won 82 per cent of the seats in the 1990 general election - to boycott the process, the Commission should now condemn the National Convention as an illegal entity, and urge SLORC to convene the National Assembly forthwith.

41. Mr. BANDAY (Muslim World League) said that India continued to engage in all manner of gross violations of human rights in Kashmir. In recent weeks at least 20 human rights activists, including eminent public figures, had been killed in custody or gunned down in the streets by Indian forces. The people

of Kashmir were peace-loving and their accredited leadership, All Parties Hurriyat Conference, had repeatedly offered to halt the violence and engage in peaceful negotiations to settle the Kashmir dispute. The Indian Government had responded by stepping up its campaign of terrorism so as to intimidate the people of Kashmir into renouncing the right to self-determination promised to them by Security Council resolutions.

42. The Kashmir issue seriously threatened the safety and stability of South Asia, and had already led to armed conflict between India and Pakistan on three occasions. If there was any truth to the rumours that both countries had now acquired a nuclear capability, there was every possibility that the dispute could end in nuclear war. He therefore called on the Commission to take appropriate steps to stop human rights violations in Kashmir and to rescue its people from the State terrorism unleashed by the Government of India.

43. Mr. KHOURI (Union of Arab Jurists), speaking on behalf of 22 NGOs*, said that two major causes of violations of human rights were the imposition of economic blockades and embargoes and their maintenance long after any moral justification for their imposition had vanished. The international community must draw up a moral charter applicable to international relations. He read out the text of an appeal, signed by the 22 NGOs, calling for a lifting of the embargo imposed on Iraq. That appeal noted that the embargo had been in force for almost six years, although the circumstances that had led the Security Council to impose it no longer obtained; that the main victims were Iraqi civilians; that the mortality rate among children had increased sixfold since 1990; and that health, educational and economic infrastructures had deteriorated to such an extent that the country was again living in a pre-industrial age. The signatories called upon the Commission to secure the lifting of the embargo. In particular, they called on the Security Council to lift the oil embargo, in application of the provisions of paragraph 22 of resolution 687 (1991), so as to enable the population to regain access to products vital to its survival.

44. Ms. BRIE (France Libertés: Fondation Danielle Mitterrand) said that, as the situation of human rights in Colombia continued to worsen, the Commission must do more to halt its further deterioration. In particular, the recommendations made between 1988 and 1994 must be implemented, there must be an end to impunity, the restrictions on states of emergency set forth in the 1991 Constitution must be respected, and efforts must be made to end the armed conflict. Moreover, the Commission should continue its consideration of Colombia at its fifty-third session, and must appoint a special rapporteur on that country without delay.

45. Her organization was also concerned at the situation in Iraq. It called for the deployment of international observers throughout the territory, for the establishment of an international tribunal to try those responsible for the genocide of the Kurdish population, and for financial compensation to victims.

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* The list of the NGOs concerned is annexed to this summary record.

46. In Turkey, too, the situation of human rights was extremely serious. The authorities refused to cooperate with international monitoring mechanisms, and severe restrictions were imposed on judicial, civil and political freedoms and the activities of human rights bodies. Turkey was also obstructing humanitarian operations in northern Iraq, in violation of Security Council resolution 688 (1991). The Commission should therefore appoint a special rapporteur to investigate the situation.

47. Mr. KALATTAS (Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council) said that, as a result of the Turkish invasion in 1974, 82 per cent of the Greek Cypriot population had been expelled from the occupied area of Cyprus and the rest had been enclaved in their villages in the Karpas, where they were harassed and intimidated. Despite the Vienna agreement of 1975, Turkey was still pursuing a policy of ethnic cleansing. Members of the enclaved population were denied access to medical doctors and educational facilities, and were separated from their families and lacked protection from atrocities committed by mainland settlers. Moreover, the movements of the United Nations Peace-Keeping Force in Cyprus were restricted.

48. The tragic situation in the Karpas and the unacceptable living conditions of the enclaved population had been described in numerous reports of the Secretary-General and confirmed by two United States Congressmen and the Rapporteur of the Political Affairs Committee of the Council of Europe. Furthermore, the European Commission of Human Rights had found Turkey responsible for grave infringements of human rights in Cyprus since 1974. He therefore strongly urged the Commission to get the Turkish Government to respect the basic human rights of the people concerned.

49. Ms. FALLON (Franciscans International) strongly urged the immediate appointment of a special rapporteur on Colombia to investigate reports of numerous political assassinations, unexplained deaths, torture and other violations of human rights.

50. Ms. McFADYEN-JONES (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) explained that, as the League had sent numerous fact-finding missions to Lebanon, she drew attention to the plight of the thousands of registered and unregistered Palestinian refugees in that country. The majority lived in extremely overcrowded camps in cramped conditions with poor sanitary facilities and basic utilities which functioned only sporadically. They were not allowed to work and, as financial assistance had dwindled, malnutrition was causing major health problems, yet medical treatment was rudimentary and social services non-existent. Some refugees, who had been displaced by camp closures to make way for profitable tourist developments, were homeless.

51. While the peace process was welcome, it had marginalized the Palestinians in Lebanon, who had become stateless. They required urgent assistance over and above what the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) could provide. The United Nations, which had decided to partition Palestine, had a responsibility towards those refugees. Failure to achieve a just and comprehensive solution to their predicament would jeopardize peace in the Middle East.

52. Ms. de WEICHS (Asian Buddhists Conference for Peace) believed that only persistent efforts by the Commission would lead to effective dialogue with Governments and put an end to human rights abuses. Tibet was one example where such dialogue was needed after the transfer of approximately 7.5 million Chinese to the country. The main beneficiaries of any incentives for the economic development of Tibet were the Chinese, not the Tibetans. China had not cooperated with the Commission to end human rights abuses in Tibet, where the survival of the local population was threatened, and the Commission should therefore adopt the draft resolution on China.

53. One example of dialogue failing to stop human rights abuses was the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, where Government security forces had instituted a reign of terror against the Jumma people despite the existence of a cease-fire agreement. Large-scale displacement of Jummas had occurred and their peaceful activities were being disrupted by gangs of Bengali and indigenous youths at the Government's behest. The Deputy Commissioner was reportedly powerless to prevent such human rights abuses and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture had been refused access to the area.

54. She urged the Commission to persuade the Government of Bangladesh to demonstrate its political will to reach a negotiated settlement by withdrawing its armed forces from the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

55. Mr. LIU Qing (International League for Human Rights), speaking as a former prisoner of conscience in China, said that the Chinese authorities were taking severe measures against critics of the Government and employing illegal coercive measures against them. He enumerated several egregious and flagrant violations of the human rights of dissidents, ranging from the restriction of their fundamental freedoms to the harassment and intimidation of their families.

56. As human rights abuses had increased considerably in severity and frequency, he asked the Commission to adopt the draft resolution on that country, as it would be of crucial assistance to the courageous men and women in China who were striving to promote the cause of human rights.

57. Ms. GRAZ (Reporters sans frontières) said that her organization had decided to focus on infringements of press freedom in three Member States of the United Nations.

58. In Bangladesh, article 39 of the Constitution, which guaranteed freedom of the press, was hedged about with numerous restrictions, and violence against journalists had increased after the general election.

59. In Peru, three journalists had been given prison sentences under anti-terrorist legislation which, in many respects, did not conform to international standards. They ought to be released unconditionally because they were being held solely on account of their opinions.

60. In Turkey, while freedom to voice criticism was enjoyed in many fields, including politics, any journalist who broached a taboo subject was punished. In 1995 and 1996 large numbers of them had been questioned or detained, some had been ill-treated or tortured and two, Metin Göktepe and Safyettin Tepe, had even died as a result.

61. Mr. SOKHOMA (Mauritania) considered that the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms was a universal duty incumbent on all Governments, and noted that his own Government was endeavouring to realize such rights and improve living conditions. Pluralism and democracy were intimately bound up with development, but neither development nor full respect for human rights was possible without effective international cooperation, because the restriction of rights was frequently due to conditions imposed by structural adjustment programmes.

62. The international community should concern itself with all human rights throughout the world and make a united effort to remove obstacles to their realization. The worst stumbling block was underdevelopment, which threatened peace and stability, as the examples of Burundi and Rwanda had shown. The Commission should adopt measures to promote peace and reconstruction in those countries.

63. Dreadful atrocities had been committed against the Muslim population in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and those responsible for ethnic cleansing should be brought before the ICTY.

64. Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka) recalled his Government's commitment to securing a peaceful solution to the situation in the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka and reviewed the measures it had adopted for that purpose. Although the Commission at its fifty-first session had strongly urged the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to respond positively and speedily to the steps taken by the Government, they had reverted to murderous violence and terrorism which had been internationally condemned.

65. While the Sri Lankan Government had no alternative but to respond to such terrorism by military means in order to protect the civilian population, it was continuing political negotiations with a view to devolution. A bill on the subject had been drafted and would be tabled in Parliament. Nevertheless, the Government's continuing efforts to provide relief and medical supplies for internally displaced persons, whose situation had been aggravated by the LTTE's forced movement of civilians in December 1995, were being sabotaged by LTTE.

66. It was encouraging that human rights bodies were turning their attention to terrorism which spared no part of the world, and it was the responsibility of the international community to frustrate terrorists' designs. To that end, it should arrange exchanges of information in an effort to curb the illicit activities of LTTE in countries of asylum. He hoped that Sri Lanka could count on international cooperation and support to help it meet the challenges of the future.

Statements in exercise of the right of reply

67. Mr. MANGUE (Observer for Equatorial Guinea), responding to a statement by the representative of the Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples, said that the speaker was a member of the opposition which had been rejected by the people because of its radicalism, tribalism, false allegations, wasting of time abroad, misappropriation of its own funds and lack of respect for human rights. Its criticism of President Obiang Mbasogo, a humane leader who had valiantly served the people of Equatorial Guinea and had just been re-elected, was motivated solely by envy of his popularity.

68. Mr. BAUM (Germany), referring to a statement by the representative of China in response to the address to the Commission by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, said that the xenophobic attacks by misguided individuals in Germany had aroused a sense of revulsion in the overwhelming majority of the population, as the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia had confirmed during his visit to Germany. The subsequent decrease in acts of violence had been largely due to public rejection of the perpetrators.

69. Germany had agreed to cooperate fully in the procedure provided for in Economic and Social Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII) and expected other States to do likewise. It had done much to engage China in a constructive dialogue on human rights and was ready to continue that dialogue in the future.

70. Mr. TANDAR (Observer for Afghanistan), responding to a right of reply exercised by the representative of Pakistan, described as illuminating the fact that that representative had not denied any of the allegations regarding interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The Pakistan delegation had, in effect, become a mouthpiece for the Afghan opposition.

71. When the Afghan delegation used the term mercenaries, it was certainly not referring to its own people but to the foreign armed militia operating against the Government and civilian population of Afghanistan.

72. In mentioning to the unfortunate incident that had taken place at the Embassy of Pakistan in Kabul, the representative of Pakistan had omitted to mention that diplomats inside the Embassy had opened fire on peaceful demonstrators against Pakistani interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. One demonstrator had been killed and there had been five fatalities among members of the Afghan security forces who had sought to protect the Embassy. The Afghan Government had nevertheless apologized to the authorities of Pakistan for the incident and had assisted in the evacuation of their diplomats.

73. Mr. BUI QUANG MINH (Observer for Viet Nam), responding to a statement by the representative of Canada, said that the Vietnamese Constitution provided for freedom of religion and nobody was imprisoned for his or her religious beliefs or activities. There were doubtless prisoners who happened to be devotees of a particular religion but they had in all cases been tried and convicted for breaking the law of the land.

74. When persons of Vietnamese origin residing in Canada entered Viet Nam with explosives to carry out terrorist attacks, they were not serving the cause of "democratic reform". Canada should have done more to tackle the problem at its roots.

75. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had visited Viet Nam in 1994 at the Government's invitation. Its recommendations were being studied carefully and Viet Nam did not require instructions from a foreign Government regarding their implementation.

76. Mr. EGÜZ (Observer for Turkey), referring to a statement by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union, said he was not surprised at the Union's failure to mention the name of the terrorist organization that was plotting against Turkey's territorial integrity. It was well known that organizations affiliated to the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) flourished throughout the European Union and that PKK terrorists were allowed to engage in military training activities in at least one member country. It was to be hoped that the proper conclusions would be drawn from recent bloody incidents in a member country involving such elements. Those who were genuinely concerned about human rights in Turkey should condemn PKK terrorism in unequivocal terms and desist from conniving with PKK activities.

77. Mr. EL HASSAN (Observer for the Sudan) said that a statement containing unfounded allegations against his Government by the representative of the Arab Lawyers Union had ignored many positive developments in the Sudan, in particular the recent general elections that had been overseen by international observers.

78. His country's Press Act guaranteed full freedom of the press. All political prisoners had been released - an unprecedented step in a country grappling with such adverse circumstances - and the Sudanese authorities were cooperating with over 40 humanitarian organizations to improve the situation.

79. The fact that a meeting of the Permanent Bureau of the Union of Arab Jurists was to be held in Khartoum in a few days' time provided further proof of the baseless nature of the allegations against his Government. The Secretary-General of the Arab Lawyers Union was a spokesman for the armed opposition which was engaged in hostilities in the Sudan.

80. Mr. AL-HADDAD (Observer for Bahrain), responding to statements by the representatives of the International Commission of Jurists and the African Commission of Health and Human Rights Promoters, said that those organizations had been duped by terrorist groups who had destroyed property and terrorized the civilian population of Bahrain in recent months. The State of Bahrain was grateful for the support and understanding of many other States around the world that were contending with similar terrorist activities. The action taken by the Bahraini authorities to protect civilian life had been entirely within the bounds of the law.

81. Mr. AL-DOURI (Observer for Iraq), referring to statements by representatives of the European Union, Canada and Australia, said that the countries concerned should do something about the adverse impact of economic sanctions on the people of Iraq rather than making false allegations against a

Government that was desperately trying to alleviate the sufferings of its people and preserve the unity and sovereignty of the country. Surely the cause of human rights in Iraq could best be served by lifting the sanctions. Security Council resolutions were currently being used for purposes that were contrary to international law.

82. Ms. TOLLE (Observer for Kenya) said that the allegations by the Observer for Norway concerning the harassment and arbitrary detention of opposition politicians in Kenya and cases of denial of a fair trial were vague and ambiguous and riddled with factual inaccuracies. The tremendous progress achieved in recent years in freedom of speech, freedom of the press, multiparty democracy and the independence of the judiciary had been passed over in silence. Although there were certainly areas for further improvement, Kenya's overall record was positive.

83. Mr. EAFEARE (Observer for Papua New Guinea) said he failed to understand how Anti-Slavery International could purport to speak on behalf of the people of Bougainville, who scarcely recognized its existence. The Government of Papua New Guinea and the vast majority of Bougainvilleans were firmly committed to a peace process that already had many achievements to its credit. However, some factions of the BRA were bent on its destruction through criminal activities and factional violence against innocent people. He called on them to become an honest partner in a process that had brought peace to many parts of the island.

84. Mr. PANG Sen (China), responding to a statement by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union, said that the essence of human rights was equality but western countries set themselves up as tutors and judges of the developing countries, treating them as though they were still colonies. At the same time, they overlooked the evils that were rife in their own societies. Homelessness, xenophobia, racism, street violence and the gun culture were tolerated as expressions of freedom.

85. The only proper way of promoting human rights was through dialogue and cooperation. Random attacks on over 60 developing countries intensified confrontation and poisoned the atmosphere in the Commission.

86. The sudden enthusiasm for human rights and democracy in Hong Kong after 150 years of colonial rule was somewhat suspect. The Chinese people would not be diverted from the path they had chosen by slander and vilification in the name of human rights. History would take its course and power politics were doomed.

87. Mr. GJONEJ (Observer for Albania), responding to a statement by the representative of the International Federation for the Protection of the Rights of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic and other Minorities, said that the report by the Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Mr. Max van der Stoel, gave the lie to the allegations regarding such minorities in Albania made by that NGO.

88. With regard to the forthcoming elections in his country, the Federation had arrogated to itself the right to make predictions regarding their free conduct. Perhaps it could also predict the results.

89. Mr. QAZI (Pakistan), responding to the statement by the Observer for Afghanistan, said that the real voice of the Afghan people had rarely been heard at the United Nations since 1979. The representative of the ruling minority regime, which was desperate to cling to power, had hurt the sensibilities of the people of Pakistan, without whose aid his country would have been unable to expel the foreign invader. He hoped that all Afghan factions would cooperate with the Secretary-General's Special Representative and agree on a procedure for transition to a broad-based Government representing all segments of the Afghan population. Only then could peace return to the country.

The meeting rose at 9.10 p.m.

Annex

List of NGOs supporting the statement made by Mr. Khouri, Union of Arab Jurists

African Commission of Health and Human Rights Promoters

American Association of Jurists

Centre Conseil Mondial de la Paix

Centre Europe-Tiers Monde

General Arab Women Federation

International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty

International Association of Democratic Lawyers

International Educational Development, Inc.

International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples

International Movement for Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples

International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Movement Against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples

North-South XXI

Pax Christi International

Union of Arab Jurists

Women's International Democratic Federation

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

World Confederation of Labour

World Federation of Democratic Youth

World Movement of Mothers

World Muslim Congress

Young Women's Christian Association